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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The eight titles deal with the following topics: (1) the literacy demands of clerical workers; (2) reading as a composing process; (3) relationships between reading and writing performance; (4) the effects of instruction in organizational patterns on student writing competence, reading competence, and attitudes toward reading; (5) the correlation of holistic writing scores with standardized, cloze, and schema-related reading scores of adult community college students; (6) the effect of literature exposure and writing practice on the original narrative writing of second grade children; (7) cohesive ties, cloze, and teacher ratings as measures of readability and writing quality; and (8) media effects on the writing of fifth-grade children who receive story stimuli via text, oral reading, and television. (FL)

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This bibliography has been compiled as part of a continuing series designed to make information on relevant dissertations available to users of the ERIC system. Monthly issues of Dissertation Abstracts International are reviewed in order to compile abstracts of dissertations on related topics, which thus become accessible in searches of the ERIC data base. Ordering information for the dissertations themselves is included at the end of the bibliography.

Abstracts of the following dissertations are included in this collection:

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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION OF THE LITERACY DEMANDS OF CLERICAL WORKERS

Helgeson, Susan Louise
READERS READING JOHN FOWLES' DANIEL MARTIN: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF READING AS A COMPOSING PROCESS

Hill, Susan Samuels
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN READING AND WRITING PERFORMANCE: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF METROPOLITAN READING SUBSCORES AND NATIONAL ASSESSMENT WRITING SCORES

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THE EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION IN ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS ON STUDENT WRITING COMPETENCE, READING COMPETENCE, AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS WRITING

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THE CORRELATION OF HOLISTIC WRITING SCORES WITH STANDARDIZED, CLOZE AND SCHEMA-RELATED READING SCORES OF ADULT COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

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AN INVESTIGATION OF MEDIA EFFECT ON THE WRITING OF FIFTH-GRADE CHILDREN WHO RECEIVE STORY STIMULI VIA TEXT, ORAL READING, AND TELEVISION

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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION OF THE LITERACY DEMANDS OF CLERICAL WORKERS Order No. DA8302767

CRANDALL, JO ANN, PH.D. *Georgetown University*, 1981. 393pp.

Clerical workers have high literacy demands, both in the amount of time they spend reading and writing, as well as in the complexity and variety of literacy tasks they perform. Yet they often have limited education and are frequently members of ethnolinguistic minority groups who speak a nonstandard variety of English. How, then, are they able to function in their jobs? This was the central question in this research: how do women who have a high school education, speak a nonstandard variety of English, and have little or no scientific or legal education function as clerks in an agency which produces and processes documents written by and for lawyers and scientists/engineers?

A series of ethnographic and experimental approaches were used to study two types of clerical workers--mid-level clerk-typists and the highest clerical position, applications clerks. The clerks were observed, interviewed, and then participated in a job literacy program including a series of miscue and cloze tests. Although clerical workers were perceived as poor readers--a perception many of them shared--these clerks demonstrated a series of strategies for reducing literacy demands in their work and for maximizing their job knowledge, including strategies for avoiding unnecessary reading and writing; searching for information by exploiting the redundancy in both format and topic within the texts and across texts; substituting oral information for written; and effectively using manuals, especially those they developed for themselves. They were flexible readers who adjusted their reading and writing strategies to fit the task.

In the oral reading test, the variety of cloze tests drawn from general and job-related reading materials, and on class exercises, they used similar strategies to quickly locate information and to hypothesize and confirm hypotheses about word and text meaning through use of collocations, format, and other context cues.

Functional literacy research of this type, describing the literacy tasks people perform on the job and the ways in which they are able to do so, can help establish literacy as a variable construct and functional literacy as a differential set of skills applied in context to differential sets of tasks.

READERS READING JOHN FOWLES' *DANIEL MARTIN*: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF READING AS A COMPOSING PROCESS Order No. DA8215770

HELGESON, SUSAN LOUISE, PH.D. *University of Louisville*, 1981. 230pp.

This study begins to study the reading processes of novel readers. Its format follows that of Norman Holland's *Five Readers Reading*, assuming that reading process differs enough from person to person to make case studies more profitable than studies of large numbers of readers. The general hypothesis was suggested by Frank Smith's *Understanding Reading* which concludes that fluent readers bring more to the text in the way of information they already possess than they get from the visual configurations on the page. Coupled with the suggestion by Holland, David Bleich and others that readers respond subjectively to texts and that meaning lies not in the text itself but in the reader (Bleich) or in the interaction between reader and text (Holland). Smith's theory implies that novel readers bring two kinds of information to the novel reading experience, objective knowledge about the world and about literature specifically, and subjective knowledge, which results from their individual autobiographical experience. Endel Tulving's hypothesis about the difference between episodic and semantic memory serves as a heuristic which allows the researcher to separate the subjective from the objective information readers bring to texts and hence to study the process by which a fluent reader uses both subjective and objective information in memory to read a literary text.

The first three chapters review the theoretical background in literary criticism and psychology and define the research problem. The fourth chapter reviews Fowles' novel and presents profiles of two readers, one a mature but untrained reader who responds subjectively but is not able to integrate her personal responses with her objective knowledge about literature in order to understand the novel to her own satisfaction, and the second, a trained reader who moves more skillfully back and forth between his personal associations and his knowledge about the world and about literature, hypothesizing about the text's meaning and verifying his hypotheses as he reads. The last chapter reviews the methodology and suggests pedagogical implications.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN READING AND WRITING PERFORMANCE: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF METROPOLITAN READING SUBSCORES AND NATIONAL ASSESSMENT WRITING SCORES Order No. DA8226395

HILL, SUSAN SAMUELS, PH.D. *The University of Florida*, 1982. 82pp. Chairperson: Ruthellen Crews

The purpose of this study was to determine whether specific skills of reading were significantly related to specific skills in writing in order to provide implications for reading instruction.

In this study, 36 seventh-grade students and 63 eighth-grade students were administered the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT). Each of the 99 students also wrote a composition on a descriptive topic from the 1978-79 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) released exercises. The data used in the analysis included a total reading score and the six reading subscores from the MAT. The subscores included Vocabulary, Literal Specific, Literal Global, Inferential Specific, Inferential Global, and Evaluation. In addition, the writing sample collected from each student was analyzed to produce 13 NAEP writing scores, one for each of the following qualities: holistic, paragraph coherence, agreement errors, punctuation errors, spelling errors, capitalization errors, nominal clauses, nominal phrases, relative clauses, modifying phrases, adverbial clauses, adverbial phrases, and inter-T-unit coordination. The NAEP scoring guidelines were used to determine these scores.

The data were submitted to a factor analysis and a multiple regression analysis. The 13 NAEP writing variables were factor analyzed to reduce the set of scores to a smaller set of constructs. Five factors were determined to be meaningful. These five factors were then regressed on the MAT reading scores. The regression analysis indicated that three of these five factors were significant predictors of the total MAT reading score: the Writing Mechanics Factor, which included agreement, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization; the Writing Quality Factor, which included the holistic score and paragraph coherence; and the Nominal/Modifying Phrase Factor. The R^2 statistic for the overall regression model was 0.31. The statistical analysis, therefore, indicated that there was a significant relationship between reading and specific factors in writing performance. Since reading and writing performance were found to be correlated, it was recommended that reading and writing instruction should be integrated. It was also recommended that further research should be done to determine the direction of causality.

THE EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION IN ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS ON STUDENT WRITING COMPETENCE, READING COMPETENCE, AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS WRITING Order No. DA8300772

HULL, ARTHUR J., ED.D. *Boston University School of Education*, 1982. 139pp. Major Professor: Thomas G. Devine

The design for this study was a pretest-postest comparative group design using randomly selected seventh grade classes randomly placed. Four control classes were taught a composition program based on a widely used commercial composition program. Four experimental classes were taught a composition program designed to teach paragraph and essay patterns and designed to integrate student writing with reading assignments in social studies and science classes.

Results of instruction on students' writing competence were measured with a pretest-postest Writing Sample. Results of instruction on students' reading competence were measured with two instruments. The first was a *Paragraph Patterns Test* designed to measure students' comprehension in reading material of the paragraph patterns taught in the experimental writing classes. The second was the *Iowa Silent Reading Test*, 1972 ed., Level 1. Results of instruction on students' attitude towards writing were measured by an Attitude Scale.

The experimenter selected the .05 confidence level and used the t statistic to test the following hypotheses: (1) Students who received instruction in organizational patterns will improve more in writing skills than students who do not receive that instruction. (2) Students who read selections containing the organizational patterns taught in writing classes will improve more in reading competence than students who do not read selections containing these patterns. (3) Students who receive instruction in organizational patterns will

improve more in their attitude towards composition than students who do not receive that instruction.

Conclusions. On the Writing Sample, the *Paragraph Patterns Test*, three of the four subtests of the *Iowa Silent Reading Test*, and the Attitude Scale there were significant differences at the .05 level for students in the experimental group. All three of the hypotheses were, therefore, accepted.

Results suggested the development of an interdisciplinary writing-reading program in which the paragraph and essay patterns read for social studies and other reading assignments correspond to the patterns taught in writing class.

THE CORRELATION OF HOLISTIC WRITING SCORES WITH STANDARDIZED, CLOZE AND SCHEMA-RELATED READING SCORES OF ADULT COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Order No. DA8223261

HURLEY, PAUL BISHOP, JR., PH.D. *Indiana University of Pennsylvania*, 1982. 188pp. Chairman: Dan J. Tannacito

This research investigated the applicability of a set of language measures--measures which assess the reading and writing abilities of adults at a Pennsylvania community college. Current theory in psychology, linguistics, rhetoric, and education about the acquisition and teaching of literacy suggests a correlation between reading and writing at the point of college student placement. The study provides data about specific hypotheses concerning teaching theory, teaching success, and prediction of writing ability using reading tests.

To test the reading/writing connection, the research design used two writing and three different reading measures. The reading measures included a cloze test, *The Nelson-Denny Reading Test*, and a test of the use of textual-schema based on research by B.J.F. Meyer with the use of top-level structure in text. In a controlled evaluation of student writing, experienced community college English teachers used a general holistic approach (assumed in this study to be the most reliable measure of writing samples) and a feature analysis developed from Mina Shaughnessy's descriptions of basic writers (*Errors and Expectations*, 1977). The 126 student subjects formed a stratified sample of the population at Harrisburg Area Community College, a sample which the researcher suggests is representative of community college students nationwide. Pearson correlations, *t*-tests, and a multiple regression analysis tested the study's hypotheses.

The results supported the major hypotheses related to teaching success, the prediction of writing ability using reading tests, and teaching theory. Teaching success in both developmental and college-level English at the community college was confirmed by *t*-test results. The prediction of writing ability using the *Nelson-Denny*, cloze, or a multiple regression of the two was found to be statistically significant, although slightly below the 75% placement accuracy criterion set by the researcher.

Most important were the statistically significant results correlating student use of top-level structure in text with writing ability as judged by the English teachers. The researcher concludes that both reading and writing teachers should consider the possible uses of top-level structure in their teaching. The data confirm a significant relationship between the reading and writing of adult community college students.

THE EFFECT OF LITERATURE EXPOSURE AND WRITING PRACTICE ON THE ORIGINAL NARRATIVE WRITING OF SECOND GRADE CHILDREN

Order No. DA8300306

MCCONNELL, MARY ANN, PH.D. *The Ohio State University*, 1982. 178pp. Adviser: Professor Charlotte S. Huck

This study investigated the effect of literature exposure and writing practice on the original narrative writing of second grade children. Using scores achieved on a literature inventory and scores from responses to home and teacher questionnaires, one hundred forty-four children were categorized into four groups according to the amount of literature exposure and writing practice. Writing samples collected were analyzed for vocabulary, story structure elements, and holistic rating. An ANOVA revealed that children with high literature exposure and children with different writing practice received significantly higher holistic ratings than children with low literature exposure and children with infrequent writing practice. Significant differences were not noted for vocabulary and story structure elements. A stepwise multiple regression analysis revealed that literature exposure and writing practice accounted for 17.67% of the variance in second grade children's original narrative writing. Case studies of two children who participated in the study demonstrated that sex, intellectual ability, reading ability, television viewing hours, and motivation need to be considered in future studies examining factors which influence writing ability.

COHESIVE TIES, CLOZE, AND TEACHER RATINGS AS MEASURES OF READABILITY AND WRITING QUALITY

Order No. DA8304808

RENFROW, DONATA, PH.D. *Georgia State University - College of Education*, 1982. 150pp.

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of cohesive ties in essays to a measure of reader comprehension (cloze test) and a measure of teacher judgment of the essays' quality (analytic rating).

Researchers have estimated the readability of prose. Formulas primarily used word and sentence length as the best predictors of reading difficulty. Writers, however, could not manipulate those variables consistently to adjust comprehensibility of a text. Other measures of readability, based on syntax, had a sentence-level focus and did not accommodate semantic cues. Recent research has introduced the possibility of including semantic cues and extending the unit of analysis to larger units of discourse. Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1980) provided a system for analyzing prose by scoring cohesive ties which join sentences as a text.

Method. Seventy-two essays, which were assigned analytic ratings in a previous study, were prepared for cloze testing and given to college freshman. Mean cloze scores based on four readings were calculated. Each essay was scored for cohesive ties. Intercorrelations were calculated for ties, cloze scores, and ratings. A partial correlation factored out the influence of essay length.

Results. The correlation between ties and analytic ratings was .440. Of the ties, conjunctive and lexical had the highest correlations (r = .364 and r = .391). Correlations between cloze scores and cohesive ties and cloze scores and analytic ratings were small.

Conclusions. The relationship between analytic ratings and cohesive ties was moderate. Variations among the categories indicate some ties were more strongly related to ratings than others. A low correlation between ratings and cloze scores suggested they may measure different attributes of prose. Correlations with cloze may have been depressed because of low score variance. Continued research with these variables using other types of prose is warranted.

AN INVESTIGATION OF MEDIA EFFECT ON THE WRITING OF FIFTH-GRADE CHILDREN WHO RECEIVE STORY STIMULI VIA TEXT, ORAL READING, AND TELEVISION

Order No. DA8308685

TOMLINSON, CARL MARTIN, PH.D. *The Florida State University*, 1982. 113pp. Major Professor: Carol Lynch-Brown

The study investigated media effect of text, teacher-as-reader, and television on the quality of students' writing, when stimulus stories were presented prior to writing episodes. Media effect was measured within subject sample and within levels of student writing ability. Secondary questions were related to difference by medium in (1) carry-over to student writing of stimulus story vocabulary and textual or narrative content, (2) incidence of statements containing overt action, and (3) length of compositions. Once weekly for three weeks, three comparable groups of 30 randomly selected fifth-graders from a Southwest Georgia school system received the same three stimulus stories, but via different media and in different order. Following each stimulus, subjects wrote from assignments designed to elicit expressive writing patterned after the stimulus story. Interviews about writing processes were conducted with 26 randomly selected subjects from subgroups by race, sex, and predicted writing ability. Correlated *t*-tests revealed no significant differences in quality of writing or in composition length, as a result of different media.

Significantly more statements based on textual or narrative content of stimulus stories appeared, however, after televised stimuli. Descriptive data revealed some strong patterns of writing behavior which corroborated findings of previous studies. These included: (1) planning briefly before writing; (2) composing stories while writing; (3) encountering few problems with writing; (4) making few changes; (5) reading over stories not at all or to check for mechanics; (6) finding difficulty beginning stories; (7) verbalizing about writing processes in generalizations. An unusual finding was that students enjoyed writing these stories. Implications are: (1) literary models, regardless of the medium of presentation, help fifth-grade students to write; (2) literature can have a positive effect on students' attitudes toward writing; (3) television can be an effective medium for presenting literary works as writing stimuli; (4) television may be more effective than independent reading or listening in impressing stimulus story textual or narrative content on students for later use in composing their own stories.

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